



COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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THE GLEN HELEN BUILDING - SITE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE FALL CONFERENCE

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Editor's Notes and Community Service News

Most battles are won or lost before they are fought, sometimes long before. Quite commonly it is only after the outcome has been determined, perhaps beyond help, that people suddenly become feverishly concerned over the crisis. At the same time other crises, probably even more vital, are in the making, which still are largely unresolved.

Arthur E. Morgan

Our October *Nurturing A Sense of Place* conference took place in Glen Helen as a controversy was in full swing over the appropriate use of the Glen. A plan for a contested affordable housing project is languishing, with Village Council unable or unwilling to make a difficult choice. These are two of the crises which people in Yellow Springs have been struggling with this year. Looking back I wonder how it might have been different if we had focused attention as a community on these issues 10, 15, or 20 years ago? Now as we engage in these issues with the heat generated by a crisis mentality, I wonder what more subtle forces are at work that we are missing?

Nurturing a sense of place deepens our sense of connection to the land and the larger community of life. Feeling part of a place opens us to feel part of the whole. When this happens we open ourselves to the pain so many of us feel about degradation of the environment, social justice issues and effects of the global economy. Don Wallis reports on this in his article. "Nurturing a Sense of Place," about our conference. He also notes that at its heart, a sense of place is a spiritual issue. There is a nurturing that comes to us when we realize this.

I think Morgan was saying much the same thing when he said that moving from a crisis mentality meant "living this day each day, and this year each year, by the best and most inclusive purposes we have....(is where) the unseen groundwork is laid".

As we learn to reinhabit our places, how do we relate to other places and the people living in them? Would focusing on our own place mean the end of interstate commerce as one friend feared when he told me that he couldn't imagine not having his orange juice in the morning? Or would it mean being isolationists, as a local high school student criticized when I spoke to his class about developing a more sustainable local economy? Obviously we need to balance an inward focus with reaching out.

An article in the fall 1998 issue of *Communities Magazine* provides an example of how a community can connect to the outside world, community to community. In *Agents of Goodwill: How We Created a "Hippie Commune"*, the authors describe how the Tennessee commune, The Farm, created the alternative development organization Plenty in the mid-70's.* They note that, through their work with Plenty, "a partnership (was developed) with the indigenous people of the Earth (which) was the key to our mission of building a healthy, fair, kind, peaceful world...."

Without the Farm as a springboard – as source of shared vision, resources strength and support – it would not have happened. For the Farm community, Plenty has been an important source of perspective, helping us stay sane. Plenty (has) its roots in an actual village which gives its leadership an ever developing understanding of the social and political dynamics of village life." (See page 20 for more information

about a Plenty project in this country).

*Peter Schweitzer with Lisa Wartinger, "Agents of Good-will: How We Created the 'Hippie Peace Corps,'" Fall, *Communities*, Fall 1998, #100, pp. 32-35.

This newsletter includes other examples of making connections, people-to-people and community-to-community. In her article *Sweatshops - Thinking Globally, Acting Locally*, Sarah Eastman reports on some successes in dealing with sweatshops. The book, *Nurtured by Knowledge: Learning to Do Participatory Action-Research*, reviewed in this issue, focuses on building democratic social change across class and culture. Community Service member Heather Woodman inspires us with a story of the difference one girl from Sarajevo made after her family had fled to the safety of Germany.

Qani Belul, currently living in Japan, shares with us a story of the Yamagishi-kai vision in his article *Empty Pockets Open Doors: A Japanese Farm Commune*. While most of us might not choose to live communally, we can be grateful to those who do. Through their lives and work we learn what is possible when people make the commitment to live out their vision in community.

I attended the Communal Studies Association Conference in Zoar, Ohio, earlier in October. I was able to be present with people who study historical communes and folks living communally as they explored the conference theme, *Change and Dissolution in Community*. I learned that dissolution can come from successes and does not necessarily represent failure.

This summer we had a nice visit from long-time Community Service members Chris and Olga Ahrens and Al and Dorothy Andersen. Al and Dorothy gave a talk at Antioch College on their vision of a more sustainable global economy.

We have video tapes of their talk (available for \$7.50) and will discuss their vision and Al's book *Challenging Newt Gingrich* in our next issue.

We've (finally) finished remodeling the library with much appreciated help from volunteer Roger Burget. We've begun the process of evaluating our book collection.

I have joined the boards of two new Yellow Springs organizations: The Yellow Springs Community Improvement Corporation which I reported on earlier this year and HOME, Inc. a grassroots organization supporting affordable housing, including the use of a community land trust.



BILL FELKER & BIOREGION MAP

Board member Bill Felker has been helping conceptualize a continuation of the *Sense of Place* theme into next year through a series of interactive presentations. Scott Russell Sanders will be the featured speaker at the first session to be held on March 6th 1999 at the National AfroAmerican Museum and Cultural Center. The topic of that workshop will be the role of written and oral history in building a sense of place.

COMMUNITY SERVICE BOARD & ANNUAL
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST
9:00 AM - NOON, POTLUCK FOLLOWING
1320 PRESIDENT STREET
YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO

‘Nurturing a Sense of Place’

Saving the Life of the Earth

BY DON WALLIS

Don Wallis is a writer, teacher, and publisher of a country newspaper. He is the author of *Harlan Hubbard and the River: A Visionary Life*, and a new book, *All We Had Was Each Other*, to be published in January 1999 by Indiana University Press, about the African-American community of Madison, Indiana, his home town.

Reprinted with permission from Yellow Springs News, October 8, 1998 issue.

Upon the human capacity for nurturing a true sense of place may depend the fate of the Earth. For without a sense of *place* – a deeply felt awareness that here, where we are, is where we belong – there can be no real sense of community, or of health, or of ecology, or of peace.

Or of life’s full meanings. To nurture a sense of place, visionary ecologist Stephanie Mills told the Yellow Springs gathering last weekend, “is to reclaim the possibility of natural richness and human wholeness.”

That possibility must be reclaimed, she said, or else “the most rapid extinction in history” that presently is “annihilating the biodiversity of the planet” ultimately will destroy “every living creature.”

She said: “My passion in this life is that evolution should continue on this planet, Earth.”

For that, she said the world needs “people skilled in the arts of place and working in community” to develop “place-sensitive and place-expressive communities.”

In this “epochal moment of history,” a sense of place “has got to become keen in us again,” she said. “We need sense of place to safeguard the Creation.”

Stephanie Mills, author of the highly praised *In Service of the Wild* and a life’s place dweller in rural Michigan, was one of two featured speakers at the 55th annual conference of Community Service, Inc., held Friday through Sunday in the Glen Helen nature preserve.

The other speaker was Bill Vitek (pronounced Vee-teck), co-editor of the anthology *Rooted in the Land* and a professor of philosophy in up-state New York. The two talks counterpointed: Stephanie Mills spoke on the “The Possibilities of Place”; Bill Vitek spoke of the cultural obstacles to achieving these possibilities – “Conceptual Roadblocks on the Way to Place.”

The obstacles are many and powerful. “rooted deep within us, within our culture,” Vitek said – political, aesthetic and ethical values of western civilization that alienate us from the very earth we live on. In the name of individual freedom, our culture’s most valuable concept, we claim the right to own the land – the Creation becomes private property – and so it’s ours to use and abuse; we fight over it, trash it, poison it, waste it, ruin it, throw it away.

We’re not *aware* of the land, of how much we need, physically and spiritually, our places on the earth. Like autistic children, who cannot feel

an emotional connection to the people around them – their human environment – many people today are numb to any feeling of connection to their natural environment, Vitek said. They feel disconnected from *every* place. He called it “cultural autism.”

He spoke of it in personal terms. His five-year-old daughter, Carolyn, is an autistic child. She cannot form an emotional relationship with other people, or with the world. At home, when she walks through the house, Carolyn stamps her feet hard on the floor – “she needs to feel her feet,” her father said; it is how she tries to feel alive, present in the world, connected to it.

His daughter’s autism has helped him understand the phenomenon of cultural autism, Vitek said. He cited the earth-destructive human compulsion to use big and noisy machines, fast boats, motorcycles, chain saws, bulldozers. “They can’t feel connected to anything unless they’re making a big noise, running a big engine.” Building big buildings. Exploiting the land. Spoiling the earth. Destroying the planet.

Bill Vitek’s talk of “cultural autism” evoked heartfelt responses from many of the participants in the conference. Stephanie Mills had spoken of possibilities, of hope. Vitek’s talk prompted expressions of despair.

“We are all autistic,” one woman, Anna Suter, said. Jim Schenk said, with intense emotion: “I am struggling now to confront my autism. I cannot accept my disconnection. I really *need* to

believe that nature speaks to me. I really feel the need to *listen*, to *hear*.”

Hope versus despair became the defining theme of the conference. As the weekend evolved, discussions turned and returned to fervent declarations of hope and pained confessions of despair.

“My concern is for the planet,” said Lina Landess, voicing her hope: “but to save the planet just seems too overpowering, to overwhelming a task,” she said, voicing her despair.



CONFERENCE SPEAKER: STEPHANIE MILLS

She sought a middle way: “Maybe we have to admit that we haven’t found the answer to the dilemma of progress. Maybe the key is for everyone to become aware of their own little place on the earth, to identify with it, to act on its behalf. That’s something that is important, and it’s something we *can* do.”

Many of the conference participants expressed their agreement – hopeful agreement – with that.

Gradually their discussions began to move inward, in the direction of a spiritual approach to the problem of the world.

“I feel we have ripped asunder the precious web of life,” Marilan Firestone said. “I fear we may be on the road to extinction. At times, yes, I feel despair. When these times come, I try to just be in the moment, and act out of love.”

“I cook for my children, make something special I think they will like. I work in the yard,

and I think: Maybe what I'm doing will help keep the butterflies and the bluebirds alive for one more year. Then maybe after that there will be another year. Maybe there will be ten more years.

"When I can be in moments like that, I feel I have entered, just for that moment, a state of grace. My feeling is, if we go extinct in a state of grace, I will be happy."

Perhaps the planet will be saved after all. Stephanie Mills told her small discussion group: "I know there are many reasons for despair. But personally, I consider it my duty to hope. And I feel hopeful right now. I feel nurtured by being in this place and this community, with people who are concerned and committed to doing good. There are lots of caring people in the world. For me, you are the angels of hope."

"And so I am encouraged to do whatever I can in the service of what it really means to be human. To practice decency. To preserve beauty..."

"I know it will not be in my lifetime that I will see my hopes realized. But I believe that what we do now will make a difference in the long span of time."

On Saturday, Marilan Firestone of Springfield, Ohio, gave a talk on "How We Know a Place: The Mid-Ohio River Bioregion." To know the place you live in, she said, means that "you have a story for yourself, a context for your life."

She spoke of the "grand forest" that once covered this part of the continent, with towering oak trees six feet thick and a forest canopy so

dense that pioneers reported traveling for days in deep darkness.

And she spoke of the prehistoric "Mound Builders" who created in this place two thousand years ago a highly civilized, economically prosperous, peaceful, and artistic culture – "almost every citizen was an artist," she said – that preserved intact the natural environment.

Following Marilan's talk, Stephanie Mills led a hands-on workshop session, "Mapping Our Place: An Exercise in Discovering Place." Participants did indeed discover, as they tried to draw maps of the places where they live, how much they knew and how much they didn't know about them – about the lay of the land, where the wind blows, where the flowers grow, where the water comes from and where it goes, what are the native species of the plants and animals. . .

On Saturday night the "Dreamcatchers." Alicia Peters and Raymond Two Crows, entertained the conference participants with a program of storytelling, a celebration of the vast and deep meanings of all of our places on the earth.

On Sunday morning, the participants in the "Nurturing a Sense of Place" conference gathered together in the Glen for a Native American earth ritual, led by Ann Filemyr.

In the trees above the circle of people, birds twittered and sang. "They're excited we're here," Ann said. She explained the honored realm of birds in Native American cosmology:

"They are winged people. They are wise messengers. They fly great distances; they see a lot; they know what's going on. They come

back and tell us. They bring us wisdom. They help us to learn how to live in the world. That's what we're all here for. That's what we're trying to do."

The earth ritual began with a ceremony of celebration. The people of the circle stepped deeper into it, signifying their rebirth as children of the earth. Then prayers of praise and gratitude were offered in the Seven Sacred Directions – East, South, West, North, In (the earth), Out (the sky), and Here (the heart).

"The *heart*," Ann Filemyr said. "This is where we are. *Here*." Around the circle the people place their hands on their hearts. They felt their hearts beating. "You see," Ann said, "we've been in a sacred place all the time! *Here*."



ANDREA PRONKO WITH BIOREGIONAL MAP

People at the Conference:

A diverse and enthusiastic, thoughtful and concerned group of about 80 people attended the Community Service, Inc. conference on "Nurturing a Sense of Place." Here's a sampling of who they were:

Kathy Filippi, of Cincinnati, a registered nurse, active in a community-based volunteer

movement to reclaim and make ecologically viable a neglected area in her city.

Mike Sosadeeter, of St. Ignace, Michigan, a director of Habitat for Humanity and a foster parent of 25 children.

Mary Meyers and Richard Cartwright, members of Michaela Farm community, an environmental ministry of the Sisters of Saint Francis in Oldenberg, Indiana. They presented a conference workshop on feng shui.

Patricia Drake, a teacher at Centerville (Ohio) High School who makes "nurturing a sense of place" the theme of her ecology classes.

Willa Dallas, of Yellow Springs, longtime activist for social justice who attended her first Community Service, Inc. conference "about 50 years ago" with Arthur Morgan, the organization's founder.

Art and Cindy Strauss, of Columbus, who are active in their local community organization, Simply Living, and operate a lending library out of their home: "We do our best to let people know what's going on in the world that's true."

Jim Crowfoot, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, former president of Antioch College who is currently researching and writing on community stability and sustainability.

Chris and Sandy Reineck, of Fremont, Ohio, whose sense of place is nurtured by organic gardening and tree planting on their three and a half acres of land.

John Morgan, a member of an intentional community at Raven Rocks, a 1,000 acre preserve in eastern Ohio currently threatened by a proposed mining project.

His mother, Jane Morgan, of Yellow Springs, longtime manager of Community Service, Inc., described by her son as "idealistic from a very early age," whose primary interest now is "spirituality in daily life."

Roger Burget, a "traveling kind of guy" who hitchhiked to Yellow Springs from Yellowstone National Park two months ago.

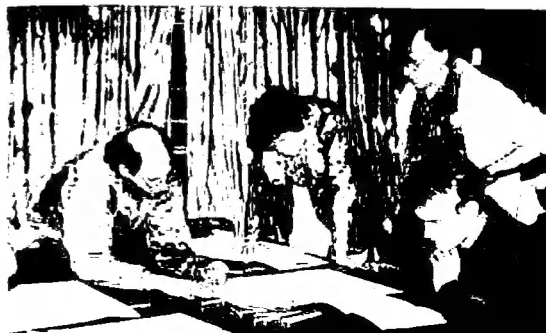
Ian Kleiman, Yellow Springs, who gave a conference workshop on "Nurturing A Sense of Place in our Bodies: The Alexander Technique."

Mary Jo Olsen, of Belleville, Michigan, an environmental activist focusing on sustainability issues, including the threat of genetic engineering of food crops



CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS DEVELOPING REGIONAL MAPS
TOP: CHARLOTTE BATTINO, MARY JO OLSEN, JIM CROW-
FOOT, KARI TULECKE.

BOTTOM: IAN KLEIMAN, HELEN EIER, BILL FELKER, JOHN
DAY



Sweatshops - Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

The information cited here is from the Fall 1998 (no. 46) quarterly of Co-op America, a nonprofit organization "dedicated to creating a just and sustainable society by harnessing economic power for positive change."

BY SARAH EASTMAN.

In countries around the world -- China, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Mexico, and even the United States -- there are hundreds of millions of people, including millions of children, working under the kind of oppressive conditions that we associate with the word "sweatshops." These conditions include the problems of wages and safety. In Nicaragua, workers at a factory in Managua sew clothes for companies such as Wal-Mart, Kmart, J.C. Penney, Gloria Vanderbilt, and Bugle Boy for about \$14.88 a week or 31 cents an hour. The basic cost of living is about \$30 a week. So

even with a tiny weekly need, they must still decide between sending their children to school and feeding them. At one of these factories, workers earn 11 cents for sewing jeans that sell for \$14.99 at J. C. Penney. Meanwhile, J. C. Penney profits reached \$566 million last year.

The National Labor Committee reported an incident in one toy factory in Kwai Yong, a Chinese city. This particular sweatshop -- whose workers labored 12 hour shifts 7 days a week for 7 cents an hour -- caught fire in November 1993. The workers tried escaping, but

the doors and windows were barred. Eighty-seven perished.

Co-op America pinpoints four concrete factors that allowed sweatshops to proliferate. Corporate greed heads the list. U.S. corporations have found that they no longer need to own and operate their own factories, so they look for subcontractors in countries where labor and operation costs are lowest. The second factor, international policies, make this possible. The World Bank and foreign lenders require developing nations to bolster their economies by creating export industries. These policies have created a glut of manufacturing plants (in countries that often have poorly developed labor and environmental laws), which allows U.S. corporations to dictate their purchase prices. The third factor is an increase in the number of middle merchants used, especially between nations. Contractors, importers, agents and others are each trying to make a profit from those directly below them on the supply chain. Consequently, factories frequently do not know where their goods are headed, just as U.S. manufacturers and merchants often don't know the product's source. All these factors add up to the final squeeze at the bottom. The factory owners are under pressures to cut costs and this happens with the laborers, who are pushed to produce goods as quickly as possible. This is how forced overtime, low wages, punishments and fines for slow work and mistakes, child labor, and other abuses come in.

While it may sometimes seem like the bad news is just getting worse, Co-op America also takes the important step of looking at where the good news is getting better. They describe several victories won in the last year in the fight against sweatshops. In San Francisco, the city announced that they would not buy goods made where there is child labor, forced labor, viola-

tion of workers' rights, or health and safety violations. The national sweat-free cities movement, which started last year with North Olmsted, Ohio, has spread to about 15 cities across the country.

After a two-year lawsuit, five companies agreed to pay \$2 million to 150 workers from a garment factory in El Monte, CA, where immigrants had been found in 1995 working under forced labor for 60 cents an hour. The workers have already received \$1 million in back wages and are now working in other U.S. factories with decent working conditions.

The U.S. Postal Service decided against shifting control of postal uniform production to one central company, which could prevent thousands of jobs shifting into subcontracted sweatshops.

Duke University announced the first antisweatshop college licensing code of conduct. Duke Students Against Sweatshops worked with the administration to develop the code, which regulates all companies that make clothing with the Duke logo. The code addresses working conditions and maximum hours per week, among other issues, and requires annual factory inspections. Student groups on other campuses are following Duke's lead.

Thousands of local activists in more than 65 communities in the U.S. and Canada, plus many more around the world, called attention to the rights of Nike's workers. Organized by the Campaign for Labor Rights and local labor groups, protesters demonstrated at Foot Lockers, Niketown, and other Nike sales outlets and on both sides of the Mexican-American and Canadian-American borders. Less than a month later, Nike CEO Phil Knight announced that Nike would no longer hire shoe factory workers younger than 18, or any work-

ers younger than 16. Knight also plans to raise air quality in all factories to meet U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

One may ask why an article about international business affairs belongs in a newsletter for Community Service, an organization committed to the small community as a basic social unit. There are two main reasons. First, the economic structure that allows sweatshops to continue to exist has a *tremendous* impact on our small communities. In communities across the nation, business is being drawn away from downtown, and into the outskirts. Part of what makes Yellow Springs a vibrant community is that downtown is alive. You can count on running into friends and community members while you do your errands. When we shop at malls and developments outside of town, we dismantle this important community structure. Meanwhile, we waste gas, create more need for highway construction, and generally make our world a little uglier. Buying from small businesses, in our community or others, helps reverse this trend.

Secondly, this issue is important to our collective conscience. I have faith that human beings long to do good for each other. In a culture where the largest businesses are exploding beyond our capability to govern them, where politicians seem more committed to pointing hypocritical fingers than to solving our problems, and where independence and getting ahead are paramount among the masses, it is easy to lose track of our basic nature of good will. Especially when it comes to good will for nameless, faceless masses of people in distant lands. But listening to the impulse to consider world justice in our daily decisions is good for the human soul. And what is good for the souls in the community is good for the soul of the community.

I like to think of every purchase as a vote -- one ballot for the kind of economy and world I want to live in, deserving of the respect that I give a presidential election. The key tool, of course, to increasing our impact in the global economy is information. Co-op America has published a tremendous resource for this, the National Green Pages, a directory of companies that are committed to more than the bottom line. The directory includes the criteria by which the companies are selected, updates on successful projects in building a more socially responsible economy, practical advice on how to make our purchases count, and most importantly, over 2000 descriptions of green businesses from book sellers to mutual fund companies to shoe manufactures. Each listing includes contact information and many include special discounts for Green Pages readers. To order a copy or for more information about Co-op America, contact them at (800)58-GREEN or 1612 K Street NW, #600, Washington, DC 20006. The Green Pages directory is also available on-line at www.greenpages.org.

Sarah Eastman, a student at Oberlin College, was an intern with Community Service this summer.



CONFERENCE SPEAKER: BILL VITEK

The Pistachio Tree

BY JEAN JOHNSON, SANTA ROSA, CA

I do think it a bit unseemly
Our pistachio tree
Should disrobe so quickly,
And let fell her luminous garment
so publicly.
She shone so brightly red –
A light bursting from the center.
The errant winds seduced her
And she succumbed.
Dropping her beauty to the ground.



SOUTH GLEN

Empty Pockets Open Doors: A Japanese Farm Commune

BY QANI BELUL

Qani Belul, a member of Community Service, Inc. has lived in Japan for three years and has written a number of articles about his experiences there with regard to sustainability, some of which have been published in *Community Service Newsletter*.

Reprinted from the July and September issues of "Nagoya Avenues"

We must accept our reality as vastly as we possibly can: everything, even the unprecedented, must be possible within it.
– Rainer Maria Rilke

Imagine for a moment, if you will, the Yamagishiist dream. Picture a moneyless world, a world where people own nothing and share everything. Imagine an international society where all people work together not for pay but as a means for themselves and others to eat well, to enjoy decent shelter and health care, to be secure in the knowledge that old age will not bring with it financial ruin.

Imagine going into a restaurant and eating your fill, then leaving without having to pay, going

into a store to borrow clothes, furniture, a car, a bicycle, to keep as long as you need.

Imagine a world without greed, without anger, without war. This is the vision of Yamagishikai, a large farm commune based in Japan.

Since money's inception, people have debated whether it is inherently bad. The Bible states, "The love of money is the root of all evil," while George Bernard Shaw said almost the opposite: "Lack of money is the root of all evil."

Seventeenth century English dramatist Thomas Decker declared, "Money is trash....," at about the same time the Japanese novelist Ihara Saikaku said, "Though mothers and fathers give us life, it is money alone which preserves it." Despite all the various opinions about money, there's no disputing that it often helps bring out people's less admirable traits, not the least of which is our selfish impulse to collect what we can regardless of – and often at the expense of – the needs of others.

Yamagishiists believe it's better for people to live and work together without owning money or property. "One people, one wallet," is their core tenet and if you want to join them you must first agree to release all your money and other assets to them. The commune, only about forty years old, includes some five thousand members who live in villages throughout Japan and other countries including Korea, Switzerland, Germany, Thailand, Australia, Brazil and the United States.

I first heard of this group several months ago when the *Japan Times* published an article about their tax problems. The difficulties arose because Yamagishi considers the assets they receive from members as lifetime investments while the Japanese government views them as gifts that must be claimed and taxed. Along with this problem, some disgruntled former members have sued the organization, demanding their assets back. More intrigued by their communal philosophy than put off by the negative press, I called Yamagishi-kai to arrange a weekend visit.

Before leaving I talked with some half-dozen Japanese acquaintances about the commune and they were quite critical. "Be careful, they're dangerous," one coworker

said. "You're going there?!" another exclaimed, as if I'd told her I was heading for a war zone. "They don't even own their own clothes;" "They don't feed their children breakfast," "Their children cannot leave to enter the real world," others told me.

This last comment, from a middle-aged Japanese housewife with a college-age son and daughter, was particularly thought provoking. What exactly is the "real" world? I wondered. Japan's fast-paced, high-tech society? The materialistic middle-class world I fled from in the U. S.? It seems to me that children born to the capitalist way of life are just – if not more – locked in as those born to other ways of life. Even if they somehow manage to see the serious flaws in the capitalist system (something many people fail to do even into adulthood) and decide to flee to, say, a communal one, relatives, neighbors, and police will always be nearby to keep them from that dangerous other.

When I asked the housewife what she'd do if her son or daughter tried to join the Yamagishi commune she told me she'd try to persuade them not to because "that way of life is a bad idea." Like so many parents, she espouses free choice for her children, while at the same time she encourages them to keep on that narrow, conventional path, the only one she trusts.

Aside from this fear for the well-being of one's children, why so much public distaste for the altruistic and peaceful practice of doing away with one's money and personal possessions to join a commune? Perhaps in a capitalist society like Japan, where the right to private ownership is zealously guarded, these fears should come as no surprise: groups thought to be of a communist bent are immediately suspect as potential threats to the status quo (which, given the right conditions, they might very well be).

Also, since members of the Buddhist sect Aum Shinrikyo released poison gas in a Toyko subway in 1995, many Japanese are wary of collectives; several people I spoke with grouped Yamagishi-kai and the Aum together as if they were both dangerous religious cults. ("Frightening," a neighbor of mine said after I described Yamagishiism to him). But during my visits to two Yamagishi villages I didn't sense that people living there were dangerous, or brain-washed, or even religious. Rather, my overall impression was that they are simply fed up with the greed and self-destruction of the society in which they were born and are searching together for a better way.

My two visits took place in midspring. For the first one, a Yamagishi member arranged for me to stay at one of the MIE villages in central Japan during their May third festival. Yamagishiists hold this large celebration every year to show the public what it's like not to need money: everything at the festival is free. On the rainy Sunday I attended, some thirty thousand people tramped through the muddy fair-grounds to collect the goods. Yamagishiists stayed busy behind the many food stands, delivering the gifts with a smile and a *dozo* ("please") to the waiting public: rice cakes and Japanese radishes, donuts, onion pancakes, hard-boiled eggs, flowers, plants, soup, noodles, fruit, milkshakes, coffee, fried meat, ice cream, plum juice ... even haircuts and shoe polishing. And many people attended for more than just a free meal and a new hairstyle. Armed with plastic bags and empty bottles, the public came prepared to haul the booty home. People in line

to collect a couple of hard-boiled eggs stashed them in their bags and immediately went to the back of the line to wait for more. Others in the milk line received their cupful, poured it into an empty juice or soda bottle, then returned for refills until their containers were full. After the festival I asked a Yamagishi member about the public's greedy behavior. "It makes them happy," he said, "and one of the beliefs of Yamagishiists is you cannot be happy unless others are too."

After the festival I boarded a Yamagishi bus with about forty others and went to Toyosato, the largest of the Yamagishi villages with some eighteen hundred residents. During the early evening before dinner, I spoke with member Takayoshi Oida. A former biology student and corporate businessman now in his thirties, he and his wife joined in the early '90s as a reaction to the Gulf War. Although his English is good, Takayoshi's answers to my many questions were often curt. When discussing Yamagishi's practices on controlling anger, for example, he tersely stated Yamagishi members don't get angry. When I asked him what people do during the initial seminars they must attend before becoming a Yamagishi member he said, "it's a secret." Again, when I asked what was the most difficult thing for him about living in Toyosato he said he had no difficulties.

*"What exactly is the 'real world'?"
I wondered? Japan's fast-paced,
high-tech society? The material-
istic middle-class world I fled from
in the U.S.?"*

Although leaving me with many unanswered questions, the visit did give me some idea of what life is like for a

Yamagishi member. In order to join, you must attend and "pass" two seminars, the first for eight days, the second for two weeks. After that, if you're truly convinced that the Yamagishi way of life is for you, you release all of your

money and other assets to the organization. In return Yamagishi guarantees your needs will be met during your lifetime – food, clothing, shelter, health care. In other words, the commune promises you true *social security* for life.

Within Toyosato are gardens and greenhouses, cars, buses, trucks, a medical clinic, a dairy and pig farm, a small store selling Yamagishi products to the public, even a hot-spring bath. Adult members live in one-room apartments and share toilet facilities with others on the same floor. They wake up early and begin their jobs without breakfast, working until about eleven o'clock when they clean up and eat the first meal of the day together in the large dining hall. After that they nap for an hour or two, return to work, then have the second and final meal of the day together at about six o'clock. They don't use money in the village and share practically everything, including food, cars, furniture, bicycles, and many of the clothes.

From about the age of five, the children live separately from their parents. They work the fields for a short while in the morning before busing off to attend public school (required by law), then return home to work some more. Yamagishiists believe young people should be encouraged to learn on their own and the children at Toyosato often work among themselves in large gardens, managing them with minimal interference from adults.

It seems one of the obvious problems of the Yamagishi system would be who does what job. Does the toilet scrubber, for example, go about his job just as cheerfully day after day as, say, the painter who treks off to the nearby mountains to paint pictures in the forest? Is the worker in the pig sties just as content to go about her work as the strawberry picker in the

fields? Members claim this isn't a problem; they say they can choose the job they want and change when they tire of it. "Nobody can tell you what to do," one longtime member told me. Also, not all members work exclusively on the communes and not all workers on the communes are members. Living at Toyosato and contributing their salaries are, for example, several doctors who work in the nearby city and a pilot who works for a commercial airline. And, for those who are hesitant to join but want a taste of the communal way of life, Yamagishi-kai permits nonmembers to live and work on the farms for a couple of days or, in some cases, for extended periods.

Residents at both the Yamagishi-kai villages I visited were quite open about their pasts and their reasons for joining the commune. One of my guides at Toyosato, Haruo Hayashi, an older, portly man in his sixties with a gentle, quiet demeanor, was formerly a company president. His two daughters joined Yamagishi-kai before him, then his wife, then, three years later, he too joined. What makes a company president give up his entire wealth to become part of a farm commune? "I finally came to realize that money isn't important," he said.

Kazuko Hirao used to live at Toyosato but has since moved to Ena, a much smaller Yamagishi village just south of the Japan Alps. It's a pleasant place, small, cool, and green with wonderful views of the nearby mountains. About forty members live together there, working in the gardens, growing peaches, raising chickens and pigs.

Kazuko is a small, outgoing woman in her fifties who used to work as an English teacher in Tokyo before joining Yamagishi-kai twenty-three years ago. "I wanted to find something different," she told me, and now

rather than devote her time to English she's a cook at the village. Her husband Noboru is a quiet man in his sixties with a friendly smile and an easy-going manner. He grew up on a pig farm in Sendai, northern Japan, and when his son eventually began taking care of the pigs it freed up Noboru to grow vegetables. What he found, though, was that his buyers were more concerned with his produce's appearance than its nutritional quality. In order to grow the perfect-looking vegetables they demanded, a lot of chemicals were required. His son too was using chemicals "to get the pigs to grow big," and, although he and his son were earning lots of money, Noboru decided that it wasn't a good way to make a living. "This kind of thing isn't right," he told me. "It leads mankind to destruction."

BUY NOTHING DAY IS COMING

THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING, FRIDAY, NOV. 27, HAS BEEN UNOFFICIALLY DECLARED "BUY NOTHING DAY" BY THE MEDIA FOUNDATION. GROUPS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ARE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE THE MESSAGE TO THE MASSES THAT CONSUMERISM NEEDS A NEW FACE, ESPECIALLY AT THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

At that time he met ■ pig farmer who was employing Yamagishi methods to raise his pigs – less chemicals and more thoughtfulness toward how the animals are treated. The farmer suggested that Norboru attend the Yamagishi seminar and after doing so he became convinced that this was a better way to farm. He adopted Yamagishi agricultural methods, then eventually became ■ member of Yamagishi-kai and turned his farm over to

them. Since that time other farms in the area have combined to form ■ Sendai Yamagishi village.

Perhaps because of the small, quiet setting of the Ena village, and because of Norboru and his wife's forthright manner, the visit provided a much clearer picture of Yamagishi-kai than did the much larger Toyosato village. As the two explained, Yamagishi-kai is not about religious worship as many outsiders seem to believe. In fact, it's just the opposite: a community based on the principle of trying to solve problems through human reasoning. "People created their problems and people can solve them. Becoming a part of Yamagishi means constant probing and searching in order to seek the best way for humans to live and interact."

In many ways Yamagishi-kai resembles ■ large family that shares everything. Within that core group there is no need for money while at the same time it is interdependent with the outside world: Yamagishi-kai is directly plugged into Japan's economy and money is vital for those commercial exchanges. Yamagishiists sell their many products – meats, eggs, produce, rice, lotions, cakes – to the public for profits which are then funneled back to the villages.

They bill their system as ecologically sound and this seems to be the case, at least to some extent. Agricultural chemicals are kept to a minimum, recycling is a priority, and the interdependence of all living beings is stressed. "The world is a unit, a one-body life." Too, the everyday habits in the communes are less taxing on the environment than mainstream society's. Eating only two meals a day and sharing goods instead of owning them help prevent overconsumption of resources. Along with these environmentally sound practices, however, are others that mirror those of the outside society:

the open burning of refuse (including plastic), intensive meat production for food and profit, a daily dependence on cars and trucks.

Thus, while Yamagishi-kai certainly represents a radical break from Japan's capitalist system, it is at the same time economically dependent on it to survive. Considering this, it seems silly for outsiders to fret over the potential dangers of some sort of communal takeover by Yamagishiists, for they would not be able to operate as they now do without massive financial support from the outside world.

Despite this independence, the fact alone that there are presently thousands of people in Japan today living together without the use of money and without personal possessions is indeed an exhilarating one. And I believe it is this economic equality among members, the *egalitarianism*, that contributes as much as any other factor to the high quality of the Yamagishi-kai's products. The workers don't punch time clocks and don't earn paychecks. Their labor is an end in itself rather than a means to another end. Work is a part of their lives just as the commune itself is, for the two are one and the same. The other day when I was talking to a Japanese college student about this work system she replied, "That's weird. Why would they do that?" It seems to me the better question is *Why don't more people do it?*

It's been said that Yamagishiists use clever tactics to draw in new members. From my own four-day experience at two Yamagishi farms this is certainly true. Here's how it works: Invite people from the rat race to the country

for a weekend outdoors. Break these people's chains for just a short time – entice them away from their sooty-factory jobs, their stifling offices, their cramped apartments filled with junk bought on credit and not yet paid for. Pull them out from under their possessions, their mortgages, their financial worries. Lure these jaded people out into the fields to labor in the shadows of the mountains where their minds can roam freely, where they can forget, if only for a short time, about money and appointments and possessions, where they will work themselves into a pleasant fatigue before heading inside for an evening meal and a good night's rest.

Frightening indeed! Were everyone to spend a day or two in this setting, who knows what might happen. Why would people do that? I'm only surprised more people haven't fled to Yamagishi-kai, begging them to take their property, and fast.

Just after my visit to the Ena village I came across a newspaper headline that read, "72% pessimistic about Japan's future." The short article underneath stated that 46% of the Japanese questioned in a survey cited self-centeredness as a contributing factor to Japan's deteriorating social conditions. Negative views like these help to explain why Yamagishi-kai continues to thrive: along with all the public dis-taste for the Yamagishi communal system is a growing number of people who, dissatisfied

with what Japanese society offers them, are searching for a better way to live.

Does Yamagishiism offer a utopian-world model? From my own perspec-

...it seems silly for outsiders to fret over the potential dangers of some sort of communal takeover by Yamagishiists, for they would not be able to operate as they now do without massive financial support from the outside world.

tive, that of a strict vegetarian and anti-industrialist, Yamagishi-kai, as it now operates, is marred by its factory farming of animals and by its heavy dependence upon the capitalist/industrialized society it is trying to remedy. Yamagishiism appears radically communal from the close-up view (which indeed it is), yet not so very different from the industry/profit based outside system when you take a step back and look at the entire operation. Consequently, although Yamagishiists' way of life is undoubtedly more earth-sustainable than the average "First World" consumer's, it's highly unlikely the earth could support their way of life were everyone to adopt it. There's simply not enough resources for all people in the world to live an industry-based, auto-dependent, meat-consuming existence.

But Rome wasn't built in a day and neither – should it ever come about – will Utopia be build in four decades. Yamagishiists have taken some innovative steps toward changing how people think about the relationship between humans, money, and material possessions. Just imagine what they can achieve if they keep working toward changing other relationships as well. For instance, if they were to continue to develop their ideas on the well-being of animals and eventually end their dependence on meat. Even the tiny Ena village, with only about forty members, produces approximately twelve thousand pigs a year. If this practice were given up, the pigs sold off and not replaced, the villages could rechannel their labor and resources into growing more fruits, grains and vegetables. This change would help them become more independent from the profit-based outside system, and result in a less violent, healthier diet. To become more humane, as Yamagishiists propound, we must stop depending on the slaughter of animals for our livelihood, for "humane" means not only compassion for humans but for animals as well.

That most people, like myself, will find flaws in the Yamagishi way isn't surprising, but this doesn't lessen the fact that what Yamagishiists have achieved in a very short time is truly extraordinary. As one Ena member said to me, "everyone has their own particular vision of earthly paradise," and it's extremely unlikely that we'll all ever agree on one system. Maybe the best we can hope to attain is a world where people strive to share, to compromise, and to keep looking for ways to improve ourselves and the society in which we live.



BOOK REVIEWS

**NURTURED BY KNOWLEDGE:
LEARNING TO DO PARTICIPATORY
ACTION-RESEARCH.** Edited by Susan
Smith, Dennis Willms with Nancy Johnson;
Apex Press: 1997; 281 pp.

BY MARIANNE MACQUEEN

Nurtured by Knowledge is one of a number of books coming out of Canada which provide accessible information for people concerned with social activism and community development. It is based in the premise that to move beyond the global crisis of poverty, war, repression and environmental degradation we need a "democratization of knowledge, development and the state." In *Nurtured by Knowledge*, Editors Smith, Willms and Johnson present a different way of looking at and doing research.

The word research means "to look at again." In Participatory Action-Research (PAR) the research is done by the "researcher" and the people involved (traditionally, the "subjects"). Through discussion of theory and real stories the editors demonstrate how PAR can change the lives of everyone involved. The contexts include families of disabled children in Canada, campesinos in Mexico, women's health care in India, HIV/AIDS work in Uganda, the Aymara people in Chile and community-based health care in Honduras.

In one story a Canadian farmer relates how a study tour in Mexico initiated a relationship between Canadian farmers and Mexican campesinos which resulted in cows being transported from Canada to Mexico and the author and his wife going to live in Mexico for several years. As the Canadians grew in understanding

of and solidarity with the Mexicans their concerns grew from "How is my cow doing?" to "Why is the price of corn so low that the campesinos cannot support themselves?"

Nurtured by Knowledge provides grounding for people working across class and culture and is food for thought for those of us working within our own communities.

Nurtured by Knowledge is available through Apex Press for \$19.75 & \$3.50 shipping. The Apex Press, 777 United Nations Plaza, Suite 3C, N.Y., N.Y. 10017-3521; 800/316-2739; Fax: 212/972-9878

**A HOME IN THE HEART OF THE
CITY** by Kathleen Hirsch; Farrar, Straus and
Giroux; 1998; 244 pp; \$24.00 hardcover.

A Home in the Heart of the City recounts how a Boston suburb, Jamaica Plain, has "experienced an extraordinary renaissance, from a decaying inner-city neighborhood to one of the most desirable locations in the Boston area – for families, artists, multicultural couples, low-and-middle class Latinos, and urban professionals." Hirsch feels that the restoration of the Main Street economy should serve as a model for others who are searching for ways to rehabilitate communities.

COMMUNITY IS THAT PLACE WHERE
THE PERSON YOU LEAST WANT TO
LIVE WITH ALWAYS LIVES . . . WHEN
THAT PERSON MOVES AWAY, SOME-
ONE ELSE IMMEDIATELY ARISES TO
TAKE HIS OR HER PLACE.

PARKER PALMER

By and About our Members.

What a treat it was to get the newsletter! I read it straight through. Thanks! It's wonderful!

We're hosting a program this weekend with Richard Harley, a journalist (also a wonderful Bible Scholar) who produced a great film for PBS called "Local Heros, Global Change." It's all about people around the world who have pushed through human limitations to bring new light into their lives. The grameen Bank takes up one whole section of the film.

As we were thinking about the past year and its lessons, we thought about ■ gracious young woman we met in Princeton this fall and an experience she had which is ■ vibrant testimony to the power of cherishing just one good idea! Ajila, a young Muslim girl, was living in Sarajevo with her family when the war broke out. A few months into the fighting, her father decided to try to take the family out of the city. They drove directly to the hills from which the enemy was shelling their home, hoping that the men doing the random bombing from afar would not kill them when face to face with actual people.

They went through 12 checkpoints on that road, taking more than 40 hours to go some 20 miles, and having their lives played with at each checkpoint. But finally the family was able to get through to the next town, alive! Ajila, and her mother and sister went on to a refugee camp in Germany, while her father returned to the struggle in Sarajevo.

Ajila was just 13 when she arrived in Frankfort, and she spoke no German at all. She says that she felt awfully helpless being there, with her father and her friends still at home facing the

horrors of the war in her country. When she could talk with her father on the phone, however, her father persuaded her that she could do something right where she was. The idea that came to her was that she could try to get every child in Germany to give at least one mark to the children struggling to stay alive – to keep some hope alive – in her country. Ajila wrote up hand-made flyers and stood on the street corner handing them out. One day she was noticed by a young woman reporter, and the woman was so moved by this effort that she joined in the challenge, offering connections, publicity, and moral support.

Ajila decided early on that she wanted every cent of the money raised to go directly to the children, and that she would try to be sure that the donors had direct feedback from the families receiving the support. In her vision, she was connecting people with people. Separate money was collected for transportation costs and the office expenses. She says that they looked for places to help where other organizations were not involved, and that the aid was always focused on reaching out and benefitting children.

Each weekend for two years Ajila (now 14 and 15 years old) traveled on the rented trucks back into her country to help with the distribution of the aid. When she talks about this experience, she says she knows that the most important thing being shared with the children was the message that they were not alone, that someone was thinking of them, that others were concerned for them in the midst of the fear and terror of all that was going on around them. Ultimately this 13 - 14 year old girl's kitchen-based project raised more than 3.6 million dollars for the children of the former Yugoslavia, and touched untold numbers of lives there and in Germany.

Ajla, her idea, and her willingness to humbly and faithfully follow where it was leading her, has certainly been an inspiration to us! She's a testament to the truth that ideas are unlimited, that they show up to be nurtured with no regard for age or maturity or nationality. Her project is not only living proof of what a difference one person can make, it shows us the power of joining together, with everyone playing even the smallest of parts. Together, with ideas leading, mountains can be moved, and – more than that -- hearts can be nurtured! Ajla is now in South Africa studying mediation and conflict resolution.

Heather Woodman, Princeton, NJ

Each issue of *Community Service Newsletter* gives me that same sense of homecoming – to my best self, and to kindred spirits – that I get from reading Wendell Berry's *What Are People For?* The articles and reviews also give me practical methods for "living on earth" and in community, and inspiration for continuing to live simply, with joy... I love Herley Jim Brown's poem, "No Problem!" Our Miami Valley is a good place to have "A sense of being native to this place" from its very beginnings "under the sea."

Ellen Duell, Dayton, OH

Thanks for the fine articles and book reviews in the recent *Community Service Newsletter*. I appreciate your concerns and efforts of outreach and exchange with various communities. In response to that I am enclosing articles that have come to me recently which may be of interest to you. With all best wishes to you, friends and co-workers in your work and inspirations for community life!

Martha Shaw, Ashley Falls, MA

Martha Shaw encloses a letter from Peter Schweitzer, Executive Director of *Plenty*, in which he explains *Plenty's* partnership with indigenous people and their spiritual understanding of life. Oglala Lakotas on Pine Ridge Reservation asked *Plenty* to assist them in strengthening their economy through the cultivation and processing of hemp. The aim of the project is to return control and benefit of Indian land to Indian hands. The story is told in the Spring 1998 (Vol. XV, No. 3) issue of *Plenty Bulletin*, the organization's publication, which may be obtained by writing to *Plenty*, P. O. Box 394, Summertown, TN 38483.

Martha also sends a story from a 1997 issue of *Annals of Earth*, about The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, a project undertaken by residents in the Roxbury area of Boston, "a community that has risen from the ashes," – "brought back from ... a dumping ground for hazardous materials."

Their ideas called for a locally-based economic development strategy based on the concept of an Urban Village. The construction of affordable housing stabilized the neighborhood and attracted families back who are investing in housing, rehabilitating existing houses and factories, and have constructed a town common. The community's vision for an urban economy challenges much of the conventional wisdom surrounding revitalization. Dudley Street residents are taking time to build a sustainable economy, of local businesses, owned and operated by residents employing residents.

See the Book Review page 18, for another successful rehabilitation in a Boston suburb, in Kathleen Hirsch's book, *A Home in the Heart of the City*.

I am interested in Larry Dansinger's study of usury/interest. This topic has a biblical history and has all but been ignored in our unregulated capitalistic culture, our "get mine first society." My dictionary says that usury is the practice of lending money at exorbitant rates of interest or an "illegal rate." Is the dictionary saying if it is exorbitant interest but legal, it's NOT usury? Interesting, isn't it, how the definer of words can support the prevailing culture. Our problems are increased as the powers take away the meaning of words. This is happening! I hope that you dwell on it in the future. Meanwhile, I would like a copy of Larry's essay. You may be interested in Ulrich Duchrow book: *Alternatives to Global Capitalist*. Drawn from biblical history, it is designed for political action.

Don Cuddihee, Greer, SC

Ed. note: Our Winter issue will focus on this topic and other economic issues.

Seeking help with issues arising in your community?
Considering intentional community as a home?

Whether you are already in a cooperative group or a newcomer, you'll get vital information from the same people who bring you *Communities* magazine and the *Communities* Directory. Plus, we'll have slide shows, a community products store, and community information tables.

THE ART OF COMMUNITY



**A Weekend
of
Networking
and
Workshops**

Willits, California
November 20-22, 1998

Our next Art of Community will be at Cedar Rapids, Iowa • June 4-6, 1999

Announcements

Nov. 17, 1998: At the Heart of It All: Community Learning Centers is the theme of the 17th annual National Community Education Day, to be observed on November 17th. The event will highlight ways that a school can be an educational, health, social, cultural and recreational hub for an entire neighborhood or community. <www.idsonline.com/ncea>.

Nov. 20 - 22, 1998: The Art of Community. a weekend of networking and workshops in Willits, CA. For information and registration, contact: Art of Community, Rt. 1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563, <http://www.ic.org/events/goldenaofc.html>. E-mail: gathering@ic.org. Phone: 660-883-5545.

End of Nov. 1998: Third Annual Permaculture Design Course Online. In depth course runs 5-6 months, distributed via e-mail. For more information request the course protocol and reading list from Elfin Permaculture at Permacltur@aol.com.

Jan. 7, 14, 21 & 28, 1999: Envisioning a Sustainable Future seminar course to examine the ecological impact of humans on planetary life support systems. Earth Healings. Phone 513-451-3932 or write EarthConnection, 370 Neeb Road, Cincinnati, OH 45233.

Jan. 9 and 23: Seminars on Simple Living. free and open to the public. January 9: The Idea of Simple Living in 19th Century America; January 23: Choosing Outward Simplicity, Gaining Inner Richness. 9:00 at Union Institute. Sponsored by Union Institute, EarthConnection and Grailville. Call Jean McKierman at 513-861-6400 ext 211 for registration information.

Feb. 4, 1999: Native Plant Symposium, sponsored by Wegerzyn Horticultural Association at Ponitz Center, Sinclair Community College. For information call Mel Fine at 937-277-9028 or 937-277-6546. Registration forms available in December 1998.

April 13 - 17, 1999: The Institute for Community Economics (ICE) will hold its National Conference in St. Paul, MN. Contact Julie Orvis at 413-746-8660 for information (Fax: 413-746-8862).

July 7 - 11, 1999: Conference for Reflection on Arthur E. Morgan's Educational Ideas at the Millennium, co-sponsored by Community Service, Inc. to reflect anew on "what is education for?" The conference is to be in Celo, NC, the intentional community founded by Morgan in the 30's. The working conference will concentrate on varied experiences of educators, from the Arthur Morgan School staff and alumni and representatives of Mitrani Ketan, the model community in Kerala, INDIA, inspired by Morgan. Registrations will be available in January 1999. Address inquiries to: Joyce Johnson, Registrar, Arthur Morgan Conference, Arthur Morgan School, 1901 Hannah Branch Rd., Burnsville, NC 28714.

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Opportunities & Resources

Highlander Research and Education Center, one of the oldest organizations for social change in America, was established in 1932. At the May 1998 meeting the Board of Directors adopted a five-year plan to ensure the continuation of the effort for fairness, equality and justice for all peoples. Earlier this year the Highlander Center brought together a diverse

group from the U. S. and Mexico to explore electoral issues, peace processes, military repression in indigenous areas, labor organizing, NAFTA and women's economic issues. They also focused on how to work locally and globally. Highlander is seeking financial support to continue its work for a more democratic, just, cooperative, peaceful and humane society. For information contact Jim Sessions, Director, Highlander Research and Education Center, 1959 Highlander Way, New Market, TN 37820 (423-933-3443; fax: 233-933-3424; e-mail: hrec@igc.apc.org)

The Institute for Community Economics, (ICE) has established a field office for Western States to help deal with the issues of affordable housing in a market where real estate growth in cities and resorts has put home ownership out of the reach of many families. ICE's Community Land Trust Model will be presented to agencies creating permanently affordable housing.

The Huggy Bear Project supplies stuffed toys to abused children in Ohio. Male inmates at Orient Correctional Institution sew and stuff bears from donated fabrics, which are then donated to domestic violence shelters in Ohio. If you have fabrics or remnants to donate, send them to Melissa Martin, Volunteer Coordinator of Huggy Bears, P.O. Box 61, Circleville, OH 43113 (740-477-6850).

Jubilee 2000/USA Campaign :A call for elimination of unpayable debt by the year 2000 of the world's poorest countries is being made by national campaigns in a dozen countries. The international scope of the movement means that efforts can be coordinated throughout the world for maximum effectiveness. The present bottom line is that governments of impoverished countries are servicing their debts by diverting limited resources from

meeting the basic needs of their people. A "Call for Debt Relief" education packet is available for \$5 (check or money order) from Jubilee 2000/USA, 222 E. Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC 20003-1036; (202-783-3566); coord@J2000usa.org

Worker Ownership: One of the challenges that local communities face in our economy is the power that large companies have to shut down profitable, fully functioning factories for reasons such as the presence of unions. But since 1987, Ohio workers have had a powerful ally in The Ohio Employee Ownership Center (OEOC) a nonprofit organization funded by the state that links workers with consultants, lawyers, and anything else they need to buy out a company which threatens to leave or when an owner retires. The OEOC has helped create six to eight employee-owned companies each year. They can be contacted at 309 Franklin Hall, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242, 330-672-3028.

Tax Victory for Land Trusts. Under a new estate tax provision in Section 6007(g) heirs may donate a conservation easement on qualifying lands in order to deduct the land's value from the estate. The provision gives families a chance to protect lands that might otherwise have to be sold to pay estate taxes. For more information contact Ray Shay, Director of Public Policy, LTA, 1319 F Street, NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20004 (e-mail: rshay@lta.org ; Web site: www.ltaorg).

The Alliance for Democracy began in August 1995 in response to Ronnie Duggers article, "A Call to Citizens: Real Populists Should Stand Up" published in *The Nation*. Within a month 1500 people united to end corporate domination of politics, economics, culture, the environment and media; and to create a just society with

sustainable, equitable economy. Contact the Alliance for Democracy, P. O. Box 683, Lincoln, MA 01773; (781-259-9395; Fax 781-259-0404; E-mail: peoplesall@aol.com).

Since its inception seven years ago, the mission at **Narrow Ridge** is to foster a keen sense of what it means to live sustainably in a society where conspicuous consumption and "affluenza" assail us on all sides. Present projects include an Earth Literacy Internship Program, Sustainable Agriculture program, Heirloom Seed Bank, Publications, and Land Trusts. Narrow Ridge also provides opportunities for retreats and academic study. Narrow Ridge Center, RR. 2, Box 125, Washburn, TN 37888; 423-497-2753.

Alternatives for Simple Living offers a resource guide of books and other resources for simple living, holiday celebrations and simple gifts and may be contacted at **ALTERNATIVES for Simple Living**, P. O. Box 2857, Sioux City, IA 51106.

Cornpak is a new environmentally friendly loose-fill packing material that contains no chemicals or synthetic ingredients. Produced by Bayer/Bruce [151 W. 2nd St., Oconomowoc, WI 53066], this alternative to styrofoam is made from ground puffed corn, and can be fed to wildlife, composted, or tilled into a garden where it decomposes completely. (*Reprinted with permission from the August 11, 1998 issue of New Environment Bulletin*, Syracuse, NY).

Earthaven Ecovillage is an ecospiritual, permaculture-based intentional village in North Carolina. For information on Earthaven and workshops in sustainable living contact: Earthaven Ecovillage, P. O. Box 1107, Black Mountain, NC 28711. E-mail: info@earthaven.org Site: www.earthaven.org.

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Membership

Membership is a means of supporting and sharing in the work of Community Service. The basic \$25 annual membership contribution includes a subscription to the quarterly Newsletter and 10% discount on Community Service-published literature. Larger contributions are always needed and smaller ones gladly accepted. All contributions are tax deductible. Due to added postage costs, foreign membership, including Canada, is \$30 in U.S. currency.

Have Your Friends Seen the Newsletter?
Please send names and addresses of your friends who might enjoy receiving a sample Newsletter and book list. For specific issues, send \$1 per copy.

Letters and Articles.

We welcome letters to the editor (under 300 words) and articles (700-2000 words) about notable communities, projects or organizations and people who are improving the quality of life in their communities. Compensation for an article is a year's subscription to the newsletter.

Address Change

If there is an error on your mailing label, or you are moving, please send the old label and any corrections to us. *The Post Office charges CSI first class postage rates on all returned newsletters.*



Expired or nearly expired memberships are notated by a red circle around the date on the address label.

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